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of the broadest fields in the health nursing work. The opportunities for service are unlimited to the young woman who enters this field with a good training in some public health nursing school as a background, a sound judgment, a clear vision, and the right spirit.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS FOR THE YEAR 1918-1919¹

BY CAROLYN E. GRAY, R.N.

The outstanding fact in this year's report is that Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock who had served as Secretary of the Board of Nurse Examiners from the time our Nurse Practice Act became a law in 1903, resigned last April to take up new work connected with public health nursing. Miss Hitchcock's service covered a period of sixteen years, during the last thirteen months of which she combined the work of State Inspector with the duties of Secretary of the Board of Nurse Examiners. This meant spending three days of each week in Albany and three days in New York, and at each place facing an accumulation of mail, the answering of which required infinite patience and attention to detail, as well as a practical knowledge of the working of our law. Physically and mentally this was no small task, and was as generous and genuine a contribution to our war service as any rendered nearer the firing lines. We are proud and congratulate ourselves that we had a Miss Hitchcock to help those who in our training schools were standing the heat and burden of the day in an effort to train an increased number of pupils to meet (what seemed to us) the insatiable demands of the Surgeon-General. Moreover, we are glad of this opportunity to acknowledge our indebtedness and record our appreciation of Miss Hitchcock's loyal service. Her resignation brings to mind that early group of pioneers who succeeded in getting our Nurse Practice Act on the statute books. Our later struggles and serious efforts to amend this law have helped us to realize the courage and statesmanship of this group, and also to marvel at their success.

I wish I could share with all of you the education it has been to me to serve on the Board of Nurse Examiners, and to have had the privilege of taking up Miss Hitchcock's work. I am frank to admit that I never realized in quite the same way, the importance of legislation, or the necessity for a better law than we have, until I conducted the examinations and rated the papers.

¹ Read at the meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association, Brooklyn, October 23, 1919.

In January, 422 candidates came up for examination. The number failing on each subject was:

Practical examination -----	28
Anatomy and physiology -----	56
Medical nursing and nursing of children-----	22
Obstetrical nursing -----	76
Materia medica -----	78
Bacteriology and surgery -----	15
Diet cooking -----	120

In June, 754 candidates came up for examination. The number failing in each subject was:

Practical examination -----	81
Anatomy and physiology -----	118
Medical nursing and nursing of children -----	49
Obstetrical nursing -----	21
Materia medica -----	149
Bacteriology and surgery -----	18
Diet cooking -----	36

Possibly because the work is new to me, I have been tremendously impressed by a number of facts which I would like to pass on to you.

1. If we arranged these candidates according to a scale, we would find an extraordinarily great contrast between those we would put at the upper end of the scale and those we would put at the lower end. I cannot emphasize this contrast too much. We have every reason to be proud of the high grade product of our schools, but even greater reason to regret the shortcomings of the poor product. Moreover, there is an undue proportion of the total number at the lower end of our scale. In my thinking, we need to give careful consideration to the injustice of a situation that allows a pupil nurse to give three years of service without receiving any adequate return either in training or education.

2. With many applicants it is difficult to find even one subject of nursing interest with which they are familiar. Questions on ethics or current topics of nursing history are utterly unknown to them. They have never heard of nursing organizations or nursing journals, and yet in the very nature of things they must take up our burdens when we lay them down. Does it seem too much to expect our pupils to have had time to read current nursing literature while in training?

3. Despite differences of opinion regarding the value of, or necessity for theoretical instruction, there has been great unanimity about the value of training in practical work, and it seems reasonable to assume that after three years of practice a fair degree of skill should be possessed by every candidate for an R.N. With all

too large a number, this skill is lacking, even in connection with the most elementary nursing procedures.

4. A large percentage of written papers prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that our entrance requirements are pitifully low, and that the equivalent of one year in high school is interpreted very broadly. We examiners expect to ignore poor spelling, and to overlook the necessity for, or customary use of capitals and punctuation marks, but we do expect some organization of facts and definite information. This is frequently lacking, and with every desire in the world to pass candidates, it is difficult to read meaning into a meaningless jumble of words.

If, as we are taught, examinations are a test of the teacher's success as well as of the student's attainments, then those of us who have been, or are teachers would find much food for thought in the written examination papers. Even a cursory reading of them would suggest that in our schools, *rote memorizing* is more popular than thinking, and the indiscriminate use of big words in the wrong places leaves no doubt that the meaning of many words in common use in hospitals is not understood. Perhaps these deficiencies would not stand out in such glaring fashion if the candidates at the upper end of our scale did not bear eloquent witness to the possibilities inherent in our system.

I bring these problems to you with a sincere hope that a recognition of them will lead to active measures to bring our average up to a higher level. We are not alone. Other groups of professional workers are actively grappling with similar conditions that obtain in their various fields. The war has shown us that a large group of uneducated citizens, either native or foreign-born, is a danger to our democracy, and various so-called "Americanization" schemes which are largely educational in their character and scope, are being tried out. In the light of democratic ideals, our whole educational system is being subjected to thorough-going analysis, and the teachers of the country are leading the way in trying to bring not only their pupils, but all of their members up to a higher level. It is because I am anxious that we too should recognize and take an active part in this educational program, that I urge upon you to make more use of the facts locked up in our examination papers and records, so that our average shall be higher and our professional group more representative of the ideals of a true democracy.